

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

December 22, 2008

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on December 22, 2008 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Commissioners David A. Duffy, Jeff Hirsh, Jason Fowler, Bernie Buonanno and Paul MacDonald.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Kim Keough and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; Martha Sheridan and Neil Schriever, PWCVB; John McGinn, Deb Tuton, Arlene Oliva, Amanda Marzullo and Nancy Beauchamp, RICC; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Lisa Coelho, Jodi Duclos and Eleanor SanAntonio, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Mark Brodner, RI Tourism; Evan Smith, Newport CVB; Steve Hahl and Judy Ferreira, VMA; Tom Crocker, Sportservice; Bob Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini was unable to attend. Mr. Duffy called the meeting to order at 12:40 pm and noted that the minutes of the November meeting had been distributed and asked for a motion to approve. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. MacDonald and seconded by Mr. Fowler it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the November meeting.

Mr. Duffy introduced Kim Keough to the Committee. Mr. Duffy said that Ms. Keough comes to the Authority from the Clarendon Group. The Committee welcomed Ms. Keough.

PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB

Ms. Sheridan noted some successes with the Ambassador program. Ms. Sheridan reported that Mr. Duffy had arranged a meeting with Dr. Dowling and through him an introduction to Dr. Wing. Ms. Sheridan said that the meeting had been very productive and Dr. Wing was receptive to assisting with the Ambassador program. Ms. Sheridan noted that the CVB will speak at Dr. Wing's next meeting and will include testimonials from attendees at meetings in our State. Ms. Sheridan reported that she will meet with Laurie White of the Chamber of Commerce and solicit the assistance of the Chamber. Ms. Sheridan said that Mark Brodner of Rhode Island Tourism will also be working with the CVB. Mr. Brodner said that there will be a connection to the CVB on the Tourism's web-site and an electronic tool for companies and corporations to recommend Rhode Island as their meetings destination. Ms. Sheridan thanked Mr. Brodner for his cooperation and assistance with the 2010 National Association of Secretaries of State annual meeting. Ms. Sheridan noted that the Mayors meeting will be here in 2009. Mr. Schriever began the CVB's

Power Point presentation. Mr. Schriever reported that the Church of the Pentecost has reserved the Convention Center for Easter weekend. Mr. Schriever noted that is normally a dark period for the facility. Mr. Duffy asked Mr. Schriever to explain tentative/prospects for Ms. Keough's benefit. Mr. Schriever said that tentative bookings are meetings and conventions that the CVB is working on contract details that will convince a group to choose Rhode Island. Prospects are groups that are in the first stages of planning. Mr. Schriever stated that we have had some success with attracting military reunions and gatherings and that the CVB will continue to pursue those groups. Mr. Schriever reported development of a new marketing campaign aimed at attracting bookings with attendees that live within a 300 mile radius of Providence called One Tank Meetings. Mr. Schriever said that the objective is to capitalize Providence/Warwick's geographic proximity to major metropolitan areas and corporate headquarters by positioning the area as the ideal drive-in meeting destination. Mr. Duffy said that he thought this was a great idea.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Mr. Duffy asked that Mrs. Cohen begin her presentation. Mrs. Cohen stated that the sales objective was to increase sales of sponsorship and signage at the Dunk. She presented a list of new contracts and reported that two contracts were not renewed, Twin River and Ruth's Chris. Mrs. Cohen stated that proposals were issued to several area

companies to advertise in the building. Mr. Duffy asked what percentage of the signage has been sold. Mrs. Cohen said that 90% is sold but that we are looking at other additional opportunities. Mrs. Cohen reported that party suites are available for upcoming events including Dancing with the Stars, Barry Manilow, and select performances of Monster Jam, Starts on Ice, Harlem Globetrotters and select performances of the Circus. Mrs. Cohen noted that a plan to create a new revenue source has been developed to divide the restaurant with room dividers and rent space to groups. The Power Point presentation contains a rental fee schedule for the restaurant. Mrs. Cohen stated that the marketing objective to expand new media marketing is ongoing and the e-blast continues to deliver. She said that revenue generated by the Dunkin' Donuts e-blast for the September 08 Disney on Ice show was up 43% over the previous year. Mrs. Cohen shared correspondence that she received from Feld Entertainment concerning Disney on Ice and our strong family show market (Included in Power Point). Mrs. Cohen also shared correspondence from the Globetrotter Organization reporting that the Dunkin' Donuts Center was named one of "Today's Top Picks" by the Globetrotter organization. Mr. Duffy asked why Mrs. Cohen thinks we are doing so well. Mrs. Cohen said that the products are quality family entertainment. She noted that families are sticking close to home and there was a heavy daytime show schedule that is a better fit for younger children. Mr. Duffy congratulated the Dunkin' Donuts staff for a job well done.

CONVENTION CENTER

Mr. Duffy congratulated Mr. McGinn on securing the Dog Show for the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn reported that the contract had been signed and that the event will take place the 2nd week in December of 2009. Mr. McGinn noted that this show has been in Boston for over 100 years. Mr. Duffy noted that Starwood Hotels are pet friendly and have heavenly dog beds. Mr. MacDonald asked if there would be stands for spectators. Mr. McGinn stated that there would not be any stands and spectators move from ring to ring. Mr. McGinn updated the Committee on the Convention Center's revenue goals per the Fiscal Year 2009 Marketing Plan and noted that he expects the facility to reach those goals even the slow economy. Mr. McGinn reported that the several new public shows are being planned for 2009 including a Fall bridal show, a "Green" health expo, a wine show and Providence roller derby. Mr. McGinn noted that the main purpose of the Convention Center is to attract conventions and trade shows. He said that those events have the greatest economic impact on the area. Mr. McGinn reported on contracted and nearing contract approval trade shows and conventions. Mr. McGinn reported that Mr. Leach had reviewed the Pfizer contract. Mr. McGinn noted that the 128 Belt Sales Blitz resulted in 3 new contacts. He also noted that Verizon, Blue Cross and Hasbro are each looking for meeting space during 2009. Mr. McGinn noted that a new catering menu is being developed and that the first outside catering event was a success. He said that APC had asked us to cater their holiday party at the Bank of

America Skating Center and that there may be opportunities for more events during the Summer and Waterfire.

VMA

Steve Hahl reported that although the theater has no money the staff is doing what they can. Mr. Hahl said that the new banners have been hung in the front doors and they look great. Mr. Hahl noted that the Providence Singers did well in spite of the weather. Mr. Hahl said that surveys are being sent to attendees. Mr. Hahl reported that the First Church of God has rented the theater for New Year's Eve. He said that this is the largest Spanish speaking congregation in the area and he is looking forward to a fun evening. Mr. Hahl reported that complementary tickets to Messiah were given to the Church next to the theater. Mr. Duffy asked what PPAC is doing to help. Mr. Hahl noted that PPAC has included the VMA in their advertising and is promoting Ron White and Manheim in their mailings. Mr. Hahl reported that the audience loved Manheim.

RI TOURISM

Mark Brodner reported that Rhode Island Tourism has joined the Ambassador program. He said that it is imperative to speak with the Legislature and the Business community and making them aware of the importance of tourism to the State. Mr. Brodner noted that work on the web site continues. He said that navigating will be easier with

a link to the CVB and will also include recipes from the area's top chefs.

NEWPORT CVB

Mr. Smith reported that Roger Dowd would be at Johnson & Wales to speak about 2009 Business and Leisure travel. Mr. Smith was pleased to report that EZ Pass has come to Rhode Island and the Pell Bridge. Mr. Smith stated that Newport is grateful that they performed as well as anyone in the country. He said that meals tax was up, cruise ship business was up, beach visits were up, but hotel tax was down as well as shopping revenue. Mr. Smith stated that the landscape indicates that tourism will be down approximately 6% next year. He said that we will use this opportunity to promote the area using the One Tank for both leisure and business travel. Mr. Duffy thanked Mr. Brodner and Mr. Smith for their attendance and participation.

Mr. Duffy asked Ms. Keough to explain her position with the Authority. Ms. Keough said that her goal is to work with the entities and to collaborate on earned media opportunities. She said that she would like a constant flow of media attention. Ms. Keough reported that she will prepare a quarterly media report and calculate the value of the earned media. Ms. Keough also noted that she would be working on the branding of the complex and that she thinks she has some very good ideas. Ms. Keough noted that continuity would be

the key. Ms. Keough said that the RFP for web design will be updated and re-issued.

Mr. Duffy wished everyone a Merry Christmas and/or Happy Chanukah. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Fowler and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:40 pm